Message

From: Sereboff, Rebecca [Sereboff.Rebecca@epa.gov]
Sent: 4/29/2021 8:32:46 PM
To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS [AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
Subject: New Clips, Afternoon Edition 4/29/21

Air

- Climate Nexus, **People of Color Breathe More Polluted Air, New Research Confirms**

Chemicals

- Heather Collins, JDSupra, EPA Announces Approval of Supplemental Residual Surface Coating Product
- Courtney Buble, Government Executive, Lawmakers Renew Efforts of Protect Animals in Government Labs
- The National Law Review, EPA Ends Priority Review of Surface Disinfectant Products, Shifts Resources Back to Standard FIFRA Registration Processes
- Nicholas Geranios, Komo News, Hanford nuclear waste tank may be leaking, U.S. officials say

Water

- Jane Boursaw, Old Mission Gazette, Watershed Center Hosts Lighthouse Beach Cleanup – Volunteers Needed
- Water World, New funding for water infrastructure projects totals $6.5 billion
- **American Iron and Steel Institute, AISI Applauds Senate Passage of Water Infrastructure Bill**

Climate Nexus, People of Color Breathe More Polluted Air, New Research Confirms

https://www.ecowatch.com/environmental-racism-air-pollution-us-2652823748.html

Oil and chemical refinery plants pollute the air near Black communities south of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Andrew Lichtenstein / Corbis via Getty Images

People of color in the U.S. are disproportionately exposed to particulate pollution and have been left behind by overall pollution reductions compared to white Americans, a new study published by researchers from five universities shows.

The findings hold true across state lines and income levels and show how decades-old decisions to build highways and industrial facilities continue to harm Black, Latino, and Asian Americans. "If you go to communities of color across this country and ask them, 'What's the source of the environmental problems?' they can point you to every one: the highway, the chemical plants, the refineries, the legacy pollution left over from decades ago, in the houses, in the air, in the water, in the playgrounds," Robert Bullard, an eminent environmental justice scholar at Texas Southern University who was not involved in the study, told The New York Times. "Empirical research is now catching up with the reality: that America is segregated and so is pollution."

As reported by The Washington Post:

Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans face a higher level of exposure than average to PM 2.5 from industry, light-duty vehicles, diesel-powered heavy trucks and construction, while Black Americans are exposed to greater-than-average concentrations from all categories in the Environmental Protection Agency National Emissions Inventory. White Americans have slightly higher-than-average exposure from agriculture and coal-fired power plants, the analysis found, because of where both are located.

"The deck is stacked against people of color, for almost every emission source," Joshua Apte, one of the authors and an engineering professor at the University of California at Berkeley, said in an interview. "The recipe we've had for improving air quality for the last 50 years, which has worked well for the country overall, is not a good recipe for solving environmental inequality."

Heather Collins, JDSupra, EPA Announces Approval of Supplemental Residual Surface Coating Product
https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/epa-announces-approval-of-supplemental-5068807/?
On April 21, 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the issuance of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Section 18 emergency exemptions to the states of Georgia, Minnesota, and Utah permitting the use of BiaXamTM B110-V and BiaXamTM B110-P (BiaXam), adhesive film used as supplemental residual surface coating, in Delta Air Lines planes and facilities in those three states. According to the EPA Authorizations for Georgia, Minnesota, and Utah (EPA Authorizations), the unregistered product is a transparent adhesive film that contains the unregistered active ingredient, Benzene, 1-(1,1-dimethylethyl)-4-ethenyl-, polymer with ethenylbenzene and 2-methyl-1,3-butadiene, sulfonated (CAS RN 1637665-77-0). BiaXam is approved for use on indoor hard, nonpliable, nonporous, nonfood-contact surfaces of aircraft, airports, and associated facilities owned or operated by Delta Air Lines, to provide residual control of the SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The adhesive film must be applied by trained applicators to indoor surfaces in airplanes, airports, and related facilities at the Delta Air Lines sites listed on the label. Prior to application of the BiaXam product, the surface initially must be disinfected using a disinfectant from EPA's List N – Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV.
The BiaXam film is to be replaced in airplanes at least every 200 days, and in airports and related facilities at least every 100 days. If the film detaches from the surface, degrades, is damaged, becomes irreparably soiled, or its edges or corners begin to peel, the film is to be removed, the surface cleaned and dried using a List N disinfectant, and a new layer of film applied to the surface according to the application instructions on the label. To maintain protective effect on surfaces that have been treated with BiaXam, only alcohol-based Purell wipes, Matrix Disinfectant/Cleaner #3 (quaternary ammonium based, EPA Reg. No. 1839-168-67026), and Lysol wipes (quaternary ammonium based, EPA Reg. No. 777-114) may be used on film-covered surfaces for routine cleaning and disinfection. The film surface is to be cleaned directly in place and not removed unless replacing. If cleaning

products are provided to the public (*e.g.*, airline passengers), only products compatible with BiaXamTM B110-V and BiaXamTM B110-P should be provided.
FIFRA Section 18 authorizes EPA to exempt federal or state agencies from any provision of FIFRA in the event that emergency conditions require such an exemption. EPA regulations (40 C.F.R. Part 166) specify when state or federal government agencies will be permitted to use unregistered pesticides in response to an emergency. EPA's regulations provide that an emergency exists when:

- There is an "urgent, non-routine" situation requiring the use of a pesticide to control a new pest not previously prevalent in the United States, to control significant risks to health, the environment, beneficial organisms, or endangered species, or to prevent specified types of economic loss; and
- There is no registered pesticide or economically or environmentally feasible alternate method of control available.

40 C.F.R. § 166.3.
The exemptions granted can be very specific and time-limited; EPA has developed a database so companies can search (by chemical, site, pest, applicant, or date range) to determine if an emergency exemption has been issued and its expiration date.
EPA's approval will allow the BiaXam product to be used at facilities owned or controlled by Delta Air Lines, Inc., at specific sites in Georgia, Minnesota, and Utah, on indoor hard, nonpliable, nonporous, and nonfood-contact surfaces in airplanes, airports, and other air-travel related facilities owned or controlled by Delta Air Lines, Inc. including, but not limited to:

- Airplanes: railings, doorknobs/handles, armrests, seatback touch screens, seatbelt buckles, window shades, overhead bins, and overhead control buttons.
- Airports and other air-travel related facilities: check-in kiosks and counters, gate counters, railings, doorknobs/handles, luggage bins, desks, keyboards, computer mice, touchscreens, printers, badge readers, plastic divider walls, hard nonporous seating, armrests, and elevator buttons.

The approved Section 18 emergency requests are effective for one year. Any unexpected adverse effects related to the use of this product must be reported immediately to EPA as required under the terms of the FIFRA Section 18 emergency exemption approval.

Courtney Buble, Government Executive, Lawmakers Renew Efforts of Protect Animals in Government Labs
https://www.govexec.com/management/2021/04/lawmakers-renew-efforts-protect-animals-government-labs/173708/

A pair of bipartisan senators reintroduced a bill earlier this week that would facilitate the retirement or adoption of animals used in federal agencies' research.
Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Gary Peters, D-Mich., introduced the Animal Freedom from Testing, Experimentation and Research Act on Tuesday. About 20 agencies use animals for research, according to the Government Accountability

Office. The federal government experimented on about 38,000 animals (mainly cats, dogs, monkeys and rabbits) in fiscal 2019 for research purposes and many agencies currently don't have a formal retirement or adoption policies for animals that aren't needed anymore. As a result, many are killed, said the senators in a press release.

"There is no reason regulated lab animals that are suitable for adoption or retirement should be killed by federal agencies," Collins said. "Our bipartisan legislation would continue to build on the successful policies at [the Defense and Veterans Affairs departments, Food and Drug Administration and National Institutes of Health] while directing all other federal agencies to facilitate and encourage the retirement of animals to help ensure they are placed in loving homes or sanctuaries." She has championed previous legislative efforts to protect great apes and chimpanzees used in federal research.

The new bill would direct all agencies to develop their own regulations through the notice and comment process to ensure that animals "whenever possible, are retired and not killed," said the press release. It would also require veterinarians to evaluate animals mentally and physically before they leave agencies to help their transition to a new home.

The legislation would also encourage agencies to work with nonprofits to place retired animals in shelters and sanctuaries nationwide; not just those near the research facilities.

"Ensuring that animals no longer used in federal research can be adopted into loving homes is simply the right thing to do," Peters said. "I am proud to partner with Senator Collins to reintroduce this bipartisan legislation that would encourage federal agencies to collaborate with the shelters that can provide these animals a safe, nurturing environment for the next phase of their lives."

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., is an original co-sponsor of the bill in July 2019. A House version was also introduced then.

The Maine Federation of Humane Societies and White Coat Waste Project, a watchdog group that advocates for more sensible spending as well as proper treatment of animals, support the bill.

"Taxpayers bought these animals, and a supermajority of us wants Uncle Sam to give them back," Justin Goodman, vice president of advocacy and public policy of the group, said in a statement to *Government Executive* on Thursday. In recent years they have "successfully secured the retirement of kittens from the [Department of Agriculture], dogs from the VA, primates from the FDA and rabbits from the [Environmental Protection Agency] and helped enact formal lab animal adoption policies at the NIH, FDA and VA."

In the past, there have been some questions over the types of homes animals go to from labs. For example, in 2012 there was some initial controversy about where 110 chimpanzees from NIH were being moved after the agency removed them from "invasive biomedical research," NBC News reported. (In 2013, NIH announced a plan to "substantially" decrease the number of chimpanzees in NIH-funded research)

There are scientific and ethical arguments for and against using animals for research purposes.

"The Animal Welfare Act is the primary regulatory instrument to protect animal research subjects," said a post from *The Regulatory Review* in October 2020. "Scholars differ on whether the [act] does enough to protect animal welfare. Some organizations oppose using any form of animal research, but others maintain that animal research is necessary for the continued improvement of medical techniques and treatments."

The National Law Review, EPA Ends Priority Review of Surface Disinfectant Products, Shifts Resources Back to Standard FIFRA Registration Processes
https://www.natlawreview.com/article/epa-ends-priority-review-surface-disinfectant-products-shifts-resources-back-to
Thursday, April 29, 2021

- **What Happened:** Citing recently revised CDC guidance suggesting that the risk of surface transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is "generally considered to be low," EPA announced that it is no longer expediting review of new registrations or claims for products intended to inactivate SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces. Instead, EPA indicated that it will shift resources to the evaluation of products that kill airborne SARS-CoV-2, as well as to meeting "critical deadlines" in the registration and review of all pesticide products within its purview.
- **Who's Impacted:** Manufacturers, distributors, and importers of all FIFRA-regulated products.
- **What Should Companies Do in Response:** Consider how EPA's newly revised priorities may impact registration actions for all pesticide products. Be aware that EPA's focus on products that make airborne antiviral claims may also be accompanied by greater enforcement attention.
- **By When:** As soon as possible.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic's spread in early 2020, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began implementing a series of policies to prioritize and expedite review of surface disinfectant products intended for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. EPA's efforts also included steps to minimize disinfectant supply chain disruptions and develop new approval pathways for "long-lasting" antiviral disinfectants and coatings. Since March 2020, EPA has added over 500 disinfectant products to its List N of products effective against SARS-CoV-2.

Earlier this month, however, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an update concerning the surface transmission of SARS-CoV-2, in which it concluded that SARS-CoV-2 infections primarily occur through respiratory exposure to airborne droplets, and that the risk of surface transmission is low. While continuing to recommend surface disinfection in indoor community settings where there has been a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the new CDC guidance suggests that, "in most situations, cleaning surfaces using soap or detergent, and not disinfecting, is enough to reduce risk."

Citing this new information, and noting that hundreds of EPA-registered surface disinfectants are now available to the American public, EPA announced that it will no longer prioritize or expedite registration activities related to surface disinfectant products. While acknowledging that disinfectants "continue to serve as one of many important tools in the fight against COVID-19 where needed," EPA confirmed that it will now review registration requests for new surface disinfectants for SARS-CoV-2 via its standard FIFRA registration process and associated deadlines. EPA will also continue to update List N as disinfectant products with new SARS-CoV-2 claims are approved.

In its announcement, EPA explained that this change will allow it to shift resources "to meeting critical deadlines in the registration and review of all pesticide products within its purview." Significantly, EPA also indicated that it will continue "to follow the evolving science of the pandemic" by shifting resources to the evaluation of "novel" products, such as those that kill airborne SARS-CoV-2.

While EPA did not identify any particular products under evaluation, in recent months EPA appears to have been applying greater scrutiny to products that claim to use ultraviolet (UV) radiation to destroy or reduce viruses. Many UV disinfection lamps and air purifiers that may claim to mitigate airborne viruses by physical or mechanical means are regulated under FIFRA as pesticide devices. While EPA does not typically review efficacy data for pesticide devices, a device may be "misbranded"—and thus unlawful to be marketed—if its labeling or other marketing materials include general or specific efficacy claims that are "false or misleading in any particular." The producers or sellers of any such devices are responsible for meeting all FIFRA regulatory requirements, including the requirement to ensure that their products perform as claimed.

More broadly, EPA's announcement also appears to be consistent with recent FIFRA enforcement actions related to products that make airborne antiviral claims. In October 2020, for example, EPA announced one of its largest-ever FIFRA civil settlements (nearly $7 million) in connection with the import of household appliances with unregistered antimicrobial-treated air filters.

Nicholas Geranios, Komo News, Hanford nuclear waste tank may be leaking, U.S. officials say
https://komonews.com/news/local/nuclear-waste-tank-in-washington-state-may-be-leaking

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — An underground nuclear waste storage tank in Washington state that dates to World War II appears to be leaking contaminated liquid into the ground, the U.S. Department of Energy said Thursday.

It's the second tank believed to be leaking waste left from the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. The first was discovered in 2013. Many more of the 149 single-walled storage tanks at the site are suspected of leaking.

Tank B-109, the latest suspected of leaking, holds 123,000 gallons (465,000 liters) of radioactive waste. The giant tank was constructed during the Manhattan Project and received waste from Hanford operations between 1946 to 1976.

The Hanford site near Richland in the southeastern part of the state produced about two-thirds of the plutonium for the nation's nuclear arsenal, including the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, and now is the most contaminated radioactive waste site in the nation.

A multi-billion dollar environmental cleanup has been underway for decades at the sprawling Hanford site.

The Washington state Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were notified Thursday that the tank was likely leaking.

"There is no increased health or safety risk to the Hanford workforce or the public," said Geoff Tyree, a spokesman for the Energy Department. "Contamination in this area is not new and mitigation actions have been in place for decades to protect workers, the public and the environment."

The tank had been previously emptied of pumpable liquids, leaving a small amount of liquid waste inside, the agency said. Systems in the area capture and remove contaminants that reach the groundwater and ensure the protection of the Columbia River, the agency said.

The leak from Tank B-109 was first suspected in March 2019, when there appeared to be a small drop in the level of its liquid waste. Monthly checks showed the level stable until July 2020, when another drop was detected, and the DOE launched an investigation.

Karen Weintraub, USA Today, The first genetically modified mosquitoes released in the U.S. to buzz in the Florida Keys

https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2021/04/29/genetically-modified-mosquitoes-released-florida-keys-first-us/4876624001/

On Thursday morning, workers from a British company placed basketball-sized cardboard boxes into six yards in the Florida Keys.

Then they added water.

In a week or so, 12,000 male Aedes aegypti mosquitoes will – one by one – begin buzzing out of each box, the first genetically modified mosquitoes to be released in the United States.

Local officials argue the trial is necessary at a time when pesticides are increasingly ineffective against these dangerous pests. A 2016 vote on the project claimed a solid majority of support in most of the surrounding counties.

"At the end of the day, our hope is to be able to control this mosquito more efficiently and keep our population below any sort of disease transmission threshold," said Andrea Leal, executive director of the Florida Keys Mosquito District. "Our toolbox for Aedes aegypti control is shrinking, unfortunately, and that's making us think outside of the box."

But years-long opposition to the test project continues, with critics arguing it could have unintended consequences and that their concerns have not been adequately addressed by the government or Oxitec, the British biotechnology company releasing them.

"When you disrupt an ecological system whether it's a small disruption or a big disruption, you're going to have an impact," said Dana Perls, program manager at Friends of the Earth, a Washington, D.C.-based environmental advocacy group that opposes the project.

"History has taught us time and time again that we need serious precaution with new genetic engineering experiments and technologies," Perls continued. "Once you release this genetic material into the wild, you can't recall it."

Male mosquitoes don't bite or cause disease, but females do. And nothing is better at finding female mosquitoes than male mosquitoes, Leal said.

In this case, the aim is to use those released male Aedes aegypti to track down mates and lay eggs. The mosquitoes of both genders have been genetically modified so that any female offspring will die before reaching adulthood. With each successive generation, there will be fewer biting females. Eventually, the population will crash entirely.

The insects also have been given a gene that fluoresces under certain lights, so scientists can easily identify and track descendants of the altered mosquitoes.

"I can understand the caution," Leal said, "this is a novel technology that has not been used in the United States before."

But she says the Environmental Protection Agency has examined every concern "and at the end of the day they've moved forward with the approvals for this project so we feel comfortable to move forward as well."

In the Keys, Aedes aegypti account for only about 4% of the total mosquito population, but the species caused 70 cases of dengue fever in Key Largo last year, and can also carry Zika, chikungunya and yellow fever. As pesticides become less effective against this dangerous pest, the state needs to find other ways to control them, Leal said.

The trial will have a relatively minor footprint – six isolated boxes releasing 12,000 male mosquitoes each for 12 weeks – so she doubts it will have a major effect on the larger ecosystem.

"We wouldn't anticipate any permanent changes," she said.

Kevin Esvelt, a scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is not connected to the project, said he sees no credible health or environmental threat.

But as someone who has spent years developing similar projects and communicating with non-scientists about them, Esvelt said both the government and company should have brought the public into the process earlier and done more to help them feel heard.

"Even if nothing goes wrong, it will still have contributed to dividing the community," he said.

And in this case, the disease risk from these mosquitoes may not be enough to justify such a cost.

"It's not clear that this is a severe enough community problem for people to take what looks to meto be an extraordinarily low risk, but it doesn't look that way to everyone," he said.

Know thy enemy

The Aedes aegypti, which is native to the African continent, arrived in the United States probably around the year 1600, Leal said, likely alongside the slave trade. The insects live their entire two-week-long existence within the distance of about two suburban houses.

The Keys, which lie at the southern-most tip of Florida, starting about 60 miles from downtown Miami, have long had a mosquito problem, mostly from the salt marsh mosquito which makes up most of the population and feeds on all mammals, Leal said. "They're much more opportunistic" than the Aedes aegypti, which prefers only one meal: human blood.

After a dengue outbreak in Key West in 2009-2010, in which 100 people were infected, the mosquito control district reached out to Oxitec. The two have collaborated ever since to meet state and federal requirements for the new experiment.

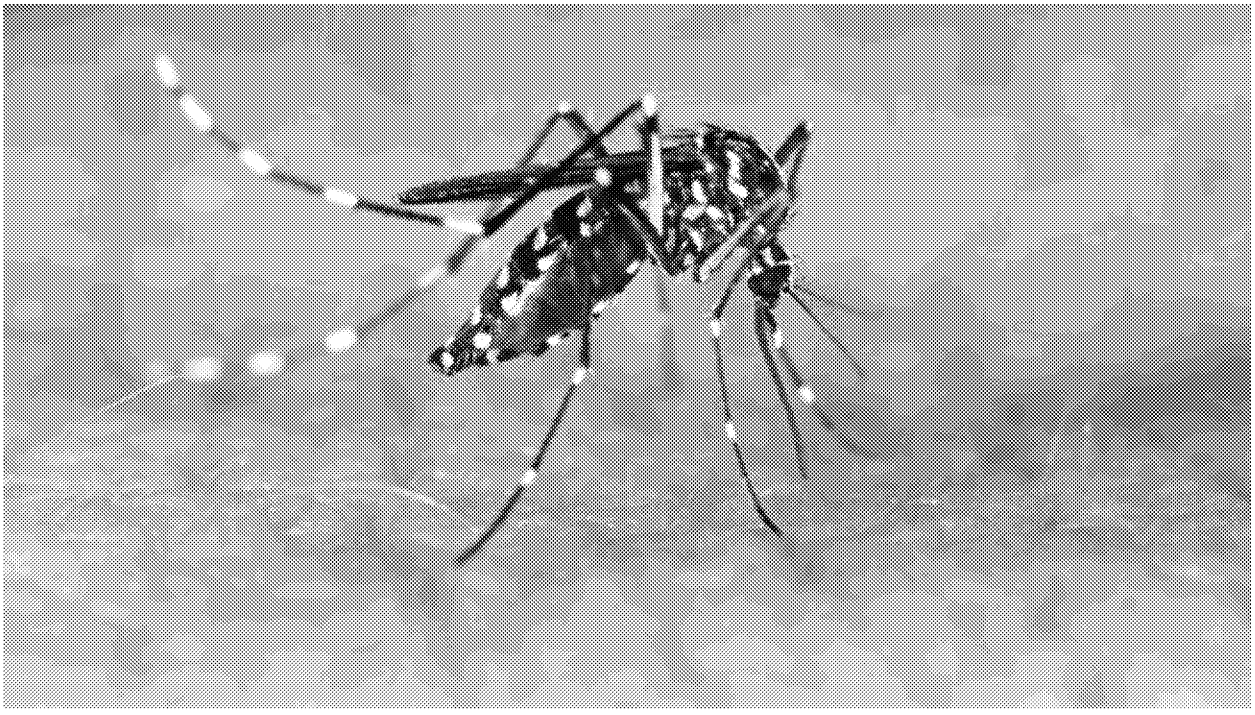
The Aedes aegypti doesn't play a key role in the ecosystem, Leal said, because it makes up such a small part of the mosquito population – no frogs will go hungry without them – and because they are not native species.

"We don't see other mosquitoes moving in to fill that niche," if the Aedes aegypti are removed, added Nathan Rose, Oxitec's head of regulatory affairs. "We've looked at that really carefully," he said, and will be monitoring to make sure it doesn't happen in Florida.

Oxitec has genetically engineered the female mosquitoes to die unless they are exposed to the antibiotic tetracycline before they reach adulthood. The males carry the same gene altered, but are unaffected by it. They continue to produce offspring as before. But only their sons survive.

After one generation, there will be half as many females as males, and half again in the next generation and the next. The man-made genetic changes should largely die out over the course of months, and not have an impact on other species, Rose said.

"This is not the first time that these mosquitoes are being released into the environment," he said. "This is just showing that it works as well in Florida as it has in other places."



Taking enough precautions?

Oxitec ran experiments in the Cayman Islands using an earlier generation of the technology, and has been using the current approach in Brazil for the last three years.

The success of that project is another point of contention between the company, which considers it a triumph, and opponents who worry that the modified mosquitoes persisted in the environment longer than they should have, perhaps permanently changing the gene pool.

The company has a network of traps near its boxes, whose locations they have not revealed, to track the mosquito population after the release and see if the genetic modifications are having any unintended effects.

One thing they will not be looking at, despite years of lobbying by Dr. John Norris, among others, is the bacteria living on those altered mosquitoes.

Norris, chief of staff for the Lower Keys Medical Center in Key West, spends a lot of his professional life helping patients fight antibiotic resistant infections. He's worried that exposing the original female mosquitoes to tetracycline so they'll live long enough to reproduce, the bacteria that live on them will be altered, and perhaps increase the risk of antibiotic-resistant infections in humans bitten by them.

All he wants, Norris said, is for the company to "find out what bacteria your little mosquito boys are going to be passing to the girls that are going to be on us."

MIT's Esvelt said he's never heard of a bacterial infection being triggered by a mosquito, but it's a simple study to do, so he thinks Oxitec should do it.

The EPA, which Rose said took 14 months to review 4,000 pages of data on the project, as well as 30,000 public comments, seemed unconcerned about Norris' infection worries.

But it did require Oxitec to ensure that the mosquito boxes aren't placed anywhere near a sewage treatment plant or a citrus grove. There, the insects might be exposed to tetracycline which is used to treat fruit trees and is found in human waste. That could allow females to survive into adulthood.

By requiring the boxes to be placed at least five-and-a-half football fields from either possible source, "the actual chance of a female finding tetracycline is extremely low," Rose said.

Other control approaches

The Keys Mosquito Control District has tried repeatedly to reduce the Aedes aegypti population by limiting their breeding spots, often in back yard flower pots, tarps and discarded tires, Leal said. But "it's difficult to get people to change behavior."

There are other ways to modify mosquitoes that don't involve genetic changes, and stir up less opposition. In 2017, the district experimented with an approach in which Aedes

aegypti were infected with a naturally-occurring bacteria called Wolbachia that renders mosquitoes infertile and unable to carry disease.

Leal said the Wolbachia trial, led by California-based Verily, went well and she hopes to add the approach to the district's arsenal, but it's not yet approved for use yet in the United States. "It's definitely a tool we'll be pursuing," she said.

Esvelt also is a fan of the Wolbachia approach, especially the nonprofit version led by the World Mosquito Program.

It's still unclear how much either the Verily or Oxitec technologies will cost, Leal said. Because the community has used both under trial conditions and neither is authorized for widespread use, the district did not have to pay for either experiment.

If approved, likely based in part on results from the Keys, Leal said she'll consider which one gives her community better results for the cost.

"Oxitec is by no means a silver bullet," she said. "We're just looking at any new tools we can add to our arsenal to get the best control possible."

Friends of the Earth and other environmental groups have been hoping the EPA would step in and stop the project. But Thursday morning passed without any word from Washington and the boxes were placed and watered.

At this point, after years of fighting and feeling unheard, activists like Barry Wray, executive director of the Florida Keys Environmental Coalition, say they feel betrayed by the federal regulatory agency, and "we have a company we don't trust."

"This is not something that should be released without investigating the risk properly, and that's what's happening and it's happening to us," added Wray, who lives in Berkeley, California.

Leal, the mosquito control board head, disagrees. After more than a decade of working with the company and years of regulatory hurdles, she feels the time is right to begin the test.

"It's difficult to be the first," she said, but "I'm really excited."

Contact Karen Weintraub at kweintraub@usatoday.com.

Health and patient safety coverage at USA TODAY is made possible in part by a grant from the Masimo Foundation for Ethics, Innovation and Competition in Healthcare. The Masimo Foundation does not provide editorial input.

Jane Boursaw, Old Mission Gazette, Watershed Center Hosts Lighthouse Beach Cleanup – Volunteers Needed

https://www.oldmission.net/2021/04/watershed-center-lighthouse-beach-cleanup/

Looking to get outside and get some fresh air? Maybe pick up a little trash along the beach while you're at it? Here's your chance!

A beach cleanup is scheduled for this Saturday at 2 p.m. along the shores of Mission Point Lighthouse. All you have to do is register here and show up at the Lighthouse at 2 p.m. Trash collection kits will be provided.

It's part of an initiative out of the Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay. The organization is coordinating a series of shoreline cleanups around Grand Traverse Bay as part of the first annual Great Lakes CleanUP from April 24 to May 2, 2021.

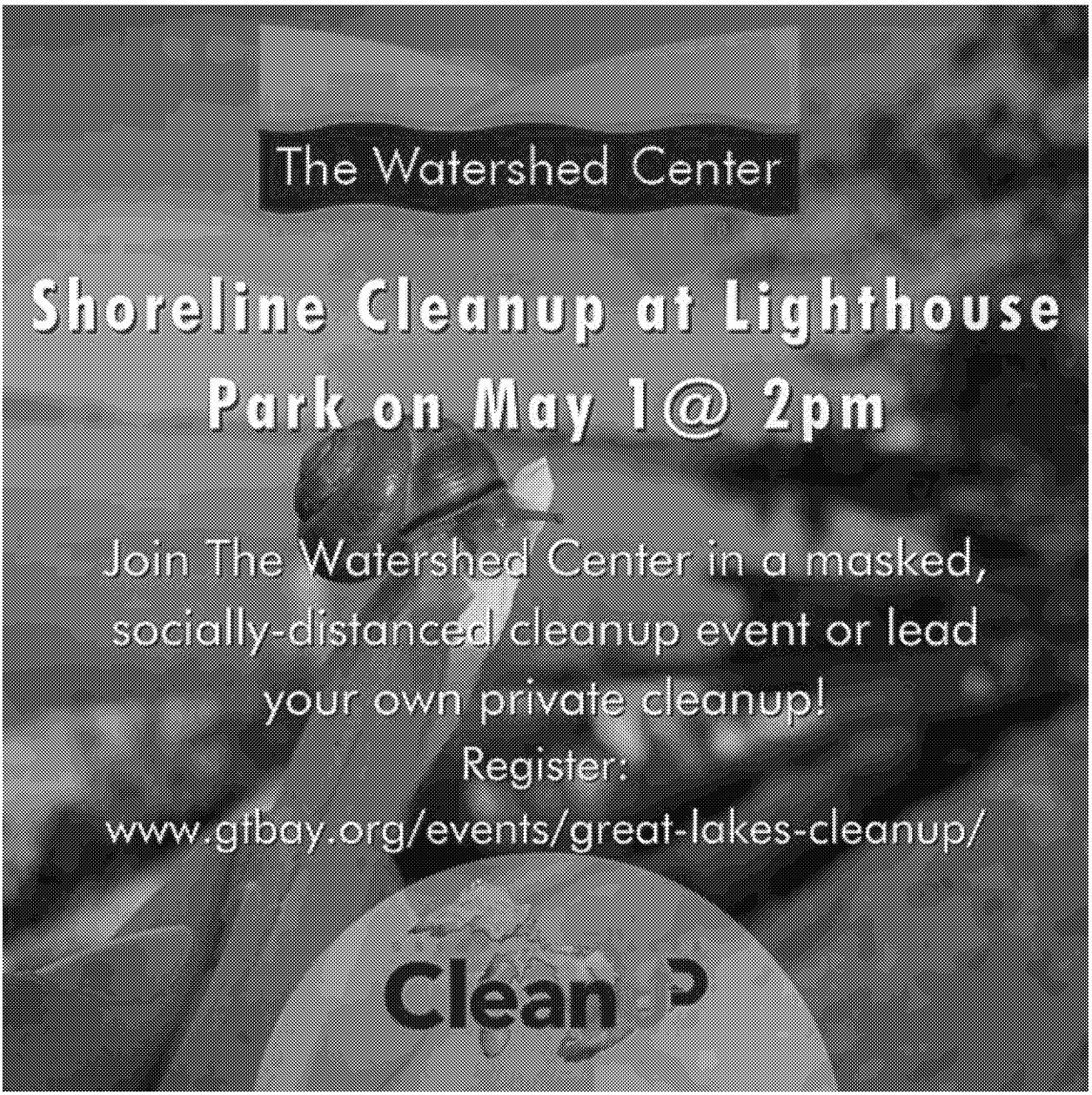
A Collaborative Effort

The event is also taking place thanks to an Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant. Our local Watershed Center is partnering with Buffalo Niagara WATERKEEPER®, New York State Pollution Prevention Institute, Friends of the Detroit River, and Milwaukee RIVERKEEPER® to coordinate shoreline and near-shore cleanups to safeguard drinking water sources and critical habitats throughout the Great Lakes basin.

The volunteer-based collaborative has a goal of removing 68 metric tons of trash from across 17,120 acres of Great Lakes shorelines by the end of 2022.

"We are honored that our friends at Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper are leading this coordinated effort across the Great Lakes basin," said Grand Traverse BAYKEEPER® Heather Smith.

She adds, "By removing trash along our shorelines, we are preventing man-made products such as plastics and other synthetic litter from threatening our drinking water and the health of fish and wildlife."



Watershed Center hosts beach cleanup at Mission Point Lighthouse | Watershed Photo

Distressing Trash Numbers

Each year 22 million pounds of plastics enter the Great Lakes and poses a tremendous threat to the 40 million people that depend on the Great Lakes as a drinking water source and the hundreds of native species that live in and rely on the lakes.

Plastic debris eventually breaks down into microplastics that bioaccumulate in fish and wildlife throughout the Great Lakes – from the largest sturgeon to the smallest

microorganisms. Plastics also attract toxic chemicals such as PCBs that bind to plastic surfaces when present in water.

Other Local Beach Cleanups

The Watershed Center's cleanups along the Grand Traverse Bay shoreline include Do-It-Yourself contactless cleanups from April 24 through May 2. Trash collection kits will be provided.

Along with our Lighthouse beach cleanup, there are two other cleanups scheduled for Saturday: City of Traverse City Bolleyball Beach and the Keith J. Charters Traverse City State Park Beach. Both of those will take place at 10 a.m.

And of course, Covid-19 protocols, including masks and social distancing, will be implemented to ensure the safety of all volunteers.

The Watershed Center is supported in the Great Lakes CleanUP by its local partners: City of Traverse City, Elmwood Township, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Grand Traverse Freshwater Society, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Green Elk Rapids, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council, Peninsula Township, Surfrider Foundation Northern Michigan Chapter, and Village of Elk Rapids.

For more info on the Watershed Center, visit their website here.

Water World, New funding for water infrastructure projects totals $6.5 billion

https://www.waterworld.com/drinking-water/infrastructure-funding/press-release/14202341/new-funding-for-water-infrastructure-projects-totals-65-billion

WASHINGTON — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Michael S. Regan announced the 2021 notice of funding availability under the agency's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program and state infrastructure financing authority WIFIA (SWIFIA) program. These lending programs accelerate

investment in critical water infrastructure through innovative and flexible financing that can support a wide range of projects in both large and small communities.
"EPA's $6.5 billion in water infrastructure funding will provide more than $13 billion in water infrastructure projects while creating more than 40,000 jobs," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. "Today's announcement illustrates the multiple benefits of investing in water infrastructure—better public health and environmental protection, job creation, and economic development. These benefits would be taken to new heights under President Biden's American Jobs Plan."
EPA's WIFIA loan program has become one of the most effective tools used to upgrade our nation's infrastructure. To date, EPA's 49 WIFIA loans are providing over $9.3 billion in credit assistance to help finance nearly $20 billion for water infrastructure while creating approximately 49,000 jobs and saving ratepayers over $4 billion. This round of WIFIA funding will provide up to $5.5 billion to support $11 billion in water infrastructure projects and prioritizes five areas:

- Supporting economically stressed communities.
- Protecting water infrastructure against the impacts of climate change.
- Reducing exposure to lead and addressing emerging contaminants.
- Updating aging infrastructure.
- Implementing new or innovative approaches including cybersecurity and green infrastructure.

EPA is also announcing funding under SWIFIA. This program, which was authorized by Congress as part of the America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018, offers low-interest loans to state water infrastructure programs that then help finance needed water infrastructure projects in local communities. This round of funding will provide SWIFIA borrowers up to $1 billion to support $2 billion in water infrastructure projects.
EPA will evaluate proposed projects described in the letters of interest using WIFIA's statutory and regulatory criteria as described in the notice of funding availability. Through this competitive process, EPA will select projects that it intends to fund and invite them to apply. EPA will accept letters of interest from prospective WIFIA borrowers until July 23, 2021. EPA will accept letters of interest from state water infrastructure programs until June 25, 2021.
For more information about WIFIA and this funding announcement, visit: https://www.epa.gov/wifia.

American Iron and Steel Institute, AISI Applauds Senate Passage of Water Infrastructure Bill https://www.steel.org/2021/04/aisi-applauds-senate-passage-of-water-infrastructure-bill/
WASHINGTON, D.C. – Kevin Dempsey, president and CEO of the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), today issued the following statement in response to Senate passage, by a vote of 89-2, of the "The Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021." Among other items, the legislation would authorize $30 billion in funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) and

$6 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF), which are Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water infrastructure programs.

"This bipartisan legislation would make key investments to fund improvements to our nation's drinking water and wastewater systems. Importantly, the bill would ensure that all iron and steel products procured for federally funded water infrastructure projects are made in America. The American steel industry is the cleanest and most energy-efficient of the leading steel industries in the world and manufactures innovative products that are critical to modernizing U.S. water infrastructure. We are pleased that passage of today's bill ensures taxpayer dollars are used to buy cleaner, American-made steel so that our products can continue to play a leading role in rebuilding our national infrastructure."